

## **White Paper: Deploying VoIP From a Business Perspective**

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### Introduction

We all know that voice over IP networks will do more than reduce toll charges. VoIP must offer new capabilities far beyond those of the current public telephone network. Companies can discover the new horizons that Voice over IP can offer and take full-advantage of these to boost productivity and enhance the value of their products and services. This paper examines the interest in VoIP by companies who seek to benefit from it.

### Experimenting With VoIP

Businesses must conduct behavioural studies on the use of next-generation telecommunications platforms. We need more projects that observe the impact of new models of communications, such as Net-Meeting-supported conferences, on teams.

Such studies are likely to remind us how resistant to change humans really are in the absence of clear incentives and benefits. Unfortunately, we won't know the rewards of improved telecommunications until some people take risks.

For IT professionals, deploying new VoIP applications begins with support for innovative users among employees. You need to create a safe environment to deploy test groups. Many companies already have such environments for the introduction of other hardware and software tools: new CAD applications in industrial design or high technology businesses, new financial or accounting packages in the business management group, etc. If your company doesn't currently plan for such pilot projects, you need to create a task force and lobby your leadership.

Once you have approval from management to experiment with communications, find enthusiastic users and provide them with the latest tools, such as new VoIP handsets or microphones and headsets connected to laptops or desktop computers. Connect these off-the-shelf components with an IP-PBX from a company that can provide you with a robust, easy-to-use solution.

Your choice of manufacturer and protocols for IP communications solutions will depend on your company's suppliers for other networking and telephony products. Whatever you decide to purchase and deploy for a pilot program is likely to be in small quantities and need not define your long-term strategy. At this stage, what you need is a platform that is sta-

ble, extensible, and easy to for you to support as you encourage experimental behaviour.

### Who Will Benefit?

The early adopters of VoIP are the small offices and home offices, according to IDC, whose report notes that households with home offices have always been early adopters of advanced technology, and VoIP is no exception. Households with home offices are twice as likely to implement VoIP than other households, according to the report, which says that about 40 percent of corporate home offices, and 24 percent of home based businesses are interested in VoIP, while only about 11 percent of general households without home offices are interested.

Naturally, the biggest driver in VoIP implementation in home offices is cost savings on long distance. IDC's studies also note that the availability of other features, such as convergence with mobile phones, will also be a driving force in small office/home office implementation of VoIP.

VoIP is starting to go mainstream, says Infonetics Research, whose report notes that the number of small, medium, and large organizations planning to deploy VoIP continues to rise. Infonetics notes that many VoIP implementations are tied to organizations needing a new phone system, and when companies need new systems, they tend to invest in the latest technology -- and so new implementations are much more likely to be VoIP-based. Some companies are actually decommissioning their older TDM PBXs in favour of a pure VoIP environment, a factor that indicates that companies have confidence in the technology.

It only follows that VoIP deployments will increase as standard POTS decreases. Juniper Research notes that VoIP services will hit \$18 billion by 2010, and this technology will dramatically reshape the communications business.

### Businesses Depend on Resellers

In addition to equipment, installation and testing, enterprise customers are looking to resellers for things such as: better management tools, third-party applications for training purposes and teleconferencing. Resellers can also play a pivotal role in integrating IP telephony with legacy systems, such as voicemail or wireless LANs.

But resellers need to be prepared and properly trained--you can't just hand the spec sheets to the guys who've been selling TDM gear for the last 20 years. That's because IP-PBXs aren't an isolated application like they were in the TDM realm. So, first off, resellers and customers need to decide whether an implementation is going to be IP-enabled, IP-integrated or fully converged with other networks and systems.

Also, resellers must be able to anticipate how the addition of packetized voice will affect WAN connections, what to do when latency disrupts communication and how to shape traffic via Quality of Service (QoS) mechanisms to ensure voice and data traffic don't collide or collapse.

VoIP also means longer lead times than many resellers are used to, and it often requires them to act more as a consultant than as a salesperson, according to those resellers and distributors who've tread down this path. And as a consultant, the reseller has to know and understand the customer thoroughly along with his most valued business objectives and the processes surrounding each of them.

### SMBs are Becoming Interested in VoIP

Voice over IP is finally coming into its own. Studies show the technology is gaining serious traction in businesses of all sizes and its use in small companies is expected to triple during the next three to four years.

A survey conducted by CompTIA (Computing Technology Industry Association), in Oakbrook Terrace, Ill., found that convergence technology—VOIP and unified messaging—is at the forefront of executives' minds.

Thirty-four percent of the 2,200 respondents in the poll named convergence as the technology that will have the greatest impact in 2006.

The survey's findings indicate that VoIP, though it remains an emerging technology, is becoming mainstream. Similarly, another recent study, by Infonetics Research, in Campbell, California, found that businesses of all sizes are evaluating or planning to deploy VOIP solutions.

Thirty-six percent of large companies surveyed, 23 percent of midsize companies and 14 percent of small companies are already using VoIP technology, according to the Infonetics study.

Infonetics predicted that VoIP adoption among small businesses will triple by 2010 in North America. Those businesses will be turning to their trusted IT advisors—their local VARs or integrators—to deploy and maintain the technology. That means VARs and integrators had better be ready to seize the opportunity.

The findings by CompTIA and Infonetics suggest that VoIP is overcoming its final hurdles. As recently as 2005, those hurdles included technical problems related to quality and end-user concerns over network security.

### With VoIP Comes Cost Savings

Potential VoIP adopters were uneasy about funnelling their voice communications over the same data networks that were constantly making headlines due to security breaches. Even despite those concerns, SMBs (small and medium-sized businesses) have been expressing a lot of interest in VoIP.

That's because, if nothing else, the cost savings of moving to VoIP from existing phone systems is significant. Phone communications take place over Internet pipes, so users can get flat-rate plans with unlimited long-distance calling. For a small business on a tight budget, this has great appeal.

In addition, VoIP opens possibilities that weren't available with traditional phone service. A company using a PBX system, for instance, is limited by hardware constraints. But the software in VoIP solutions makes it easier to add features and make improvements along the way.

When you consider the potential for cost savings and the ability to add useful features, you can see how VoIP can address real customer needs, which ultimately is why the IT channel exists. Savvy VARs and integrators already pushing VoIP technology to their customers are also using the technology themselves. There isn't a more effective way to promote something than to use it first.

For channel companies providing managed services to customers, VoIP lends itself perfectly to the model. A managed services provider that has taken on the responsibility for monitoring and managing its clients' networks can get more revenue by adding voice technology. Of course, channel companies that lack voice expertise shouldn't promise their customers something they can't deliver, unless they partner with a solution provider with a VoIP practice.

Both from a technology and business perspective, solution providers can make a compelling case to their clients about VoIP. And now that it appears customers finally are getting serious about the technology, it's time to make that case.

#### Conclusion: Six Reasons Why Businesses Should Migrate to VoIP

1. Lower telecommunications costs: Businesses can save between 30 and 40 percent on their telephony bills through broadband connectivity versus a traditional PSTN service.
2. Simplify Management and Administration: Before VoIP networks were comprised of many "proprietary boxes" for voice and data networks that limited a business' ability to integrate new applications. VoIP, on the other hand, is software, not hardware, based and, therefore, is easier to deploy and integrate new services.
3. Reduced infrastructure costs: Voice and data networks are converged onto a single IP network, thus significantly reducing infrastructure costs that are associated with a traditional PBX-based network.
4. Better communications: VoIP can improve a business' communications by providing flexibility and preventing proprietary lock-ins by deploying voice as a desktop application.
5. Improved employee production: A company can offer a suite of rich applications that improves the efficiency of employees, including drag and drop conferencing and on-demand recording.
6. Improved employee access: IP telephony enables remote employees to connect with the company's phone system from anywhere, thus making them available to make and receive calls as if they are in the office.

## About Dialexia Communications

Dialexia Communications is a pioneer in the world of IP Telephony and Call Processing. SMEs can make a significant transition towards a telecommunication system that will provide enhanced productivity by simplifying the complexity of their numerous needs; one system will be enough to manage telephony, Internet, e-mail and long distance thanks to Dialexia's low cost VoIP solutions. All their products are designed to work with the industry's leading gateways, facilitating installation and compatibility. Dialexia Communications offers a full suite of integrated IP Telephony applications. Their innovative Dial family includes: Dial-Gate a comprehensive web-based SIP proxy and centralized routing server with a traffic management system for pre/post paid billing services; and Dial-Office a powerful web-based 100% SIP IP-PBX. Visit Dialexia at: [www.dialexia.com](http://www.dialexia.com)



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